

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 JIDDA 08824 261526Z

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

-----013200 261547Z /47

R 261424Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 563

S E C R E T JIDDA 8824

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SA

SUBJECT: SALE OF F-15'S TO SAUDI ARABIA

1. NEAR THE END OF MY MEETING ON DEC 24 WITH FOREIGN MINISTER SAUD, HE SAID THAT THE ISSUE OF THE SALE OF F-15'S TO SAUDI ARABIA WOULD BE UPPER MOST IN THE KING'S AND CROWN PRINCE'S MIND DURING THEIR MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER. I REMINDED HIM THAT SECRETARY VANCE HAD SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT INTENDED TO GO FORWARD WITH THIS SALE AND THAT THE SECRETARY HAD EXPRESSED OPTIMISM ABOUT THE REACTION OF CONGRESS. SAUD THEN SAID THAT HE HOPED THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD GIVE POSITIVE ASSURANCE TO THE SAG ON THE OCCASION OF HIS VISIT AS THIS HAD BECOME AN EXTREMELY SENSITIVE ISSUE WITHIN THE SAG. HE SAID THAT THE FAILURE OF U.S. TO GO FORWARD AND IMPLEMENT THIS PROGRAM WOULD, IN HIS OPINION, BE "DISASTROUS" TO OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. HE REPEATED THE OFF-STATED THEME THAT SAUDI ARABIA HAD BEEN USG'S BEST AND MOST CONSISTENT ALLY IN THE MIDEAST. HE THEN ADDED" THIS FRIENDSHIP HAD BEEN PROVED BY THE ADOPTION OF POLICIES WHICH HAD SUBJECTED SAG TO MUCH CRITICISM BOTH INTERNALLY AND WITHIN THE ARAB WORLD." HE ADDED THAT IN VIEW

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OF SUCH ACTIONS, HE DID NOT SEE HOW THE USG COULD BACK DOWN ON THIS COMMITMENT. ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT STATE SPECIFICALLY, HE CLEARLY WAS REFERRING TO THE CARACAS OIL PRICE FREEZE. I HAD JUST DELIVERED TO HIM THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER OF APPRECIATION TO KING KHALID FOR THE SAUDI LEADERSHIP IN BRINGING ABOUT THE FREEZE, SO SAUD'S REFERENCE WAS QUITE CLEAR.

2. HE SAID THAT THE SALE OF AIRCRAFT TO IRAN AND TO THE SUDAN MADE OUR HESITATION ON THE F-15'S EVEN MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE SAUDIS TO ACCEPT. HE ASKED THE QUESTION, "WHAT HAS SUDAN EVER DONE OR WHAT WILL IT EVER DO FOR THE U.S.?"

3. COMMENT: HOPEFULLY THE PRESIDENT CAN GIVE DEFINITE ASSURANCES OF HIS INTENTION TO SUBMIT THE PROPOSAL WITHIN A SPECIFIED TIME PERIOD. I RECALL CROWN PRINCE FAHD'S COMMENT TO CODEL DIGGS AND SIMON ON THE SUBJECT OF THE F-15'S THAT "OUR PATIENCE IS PROVERBIAL BUT NOT INEXHAUSTIBLE." PRINCE SULTAN EXPECIALLY HAS BEEN EXTREMELY ITCHY ON THIS SUBJECT AND AN AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT WOULD BE MOST WELCOMED BY ALL OF THE SAG OFFICIALS, PARTICULARLY FAHD, SULTAN AND SAUD.  
WEST

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
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